



SCIENCE IS JUST KNOWING, NOT GUESSING

(Written Specially For The Bulletin.)
It was only an advertisement, but its heading caught my eye. "Science consists simply in substituting knowing for guessing," it began.
That was enough for one day. I didn't read any further. I have not the faintest idea what the rest of the advertisement was about. That first startling sentence set me off on a train of reflection which I haven't finished yet.

Perhaps it was a little too sweeping; maybe a little superficial; we won't pretend that it was absolutely all-comprehensive. But, so far as it went, it was a pretty good definition, now wasn't it?

But isn't that big subject which I am thinking about this morning. It is just one small phase of it. I mean that part which is still dependent with a great many upon "signs"—weather signs, wind signs, cloud signs, sun signs, bird signs, worm signs, animal signs—all sorts of signs.

I don't suppose there is a farmer anywhere in the country, no matter how many barometers and thermometers and hygrometers he may have and use, who doesn't regularly cast a morning glance at the sun to note the appearance of the eastern sky at sunrise. Or who doesn't associate a slightly smoky atmosphere with a dry spell. Or doesn't expect a storm when he thinks we have found that they mean something good or bad about coming weather. In addition, some of us have

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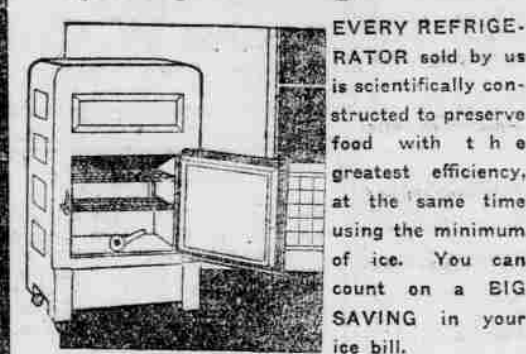
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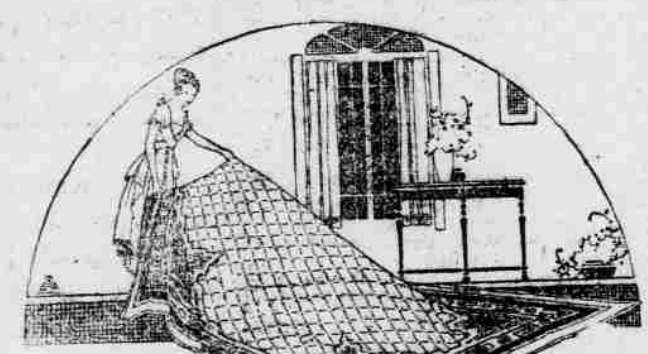
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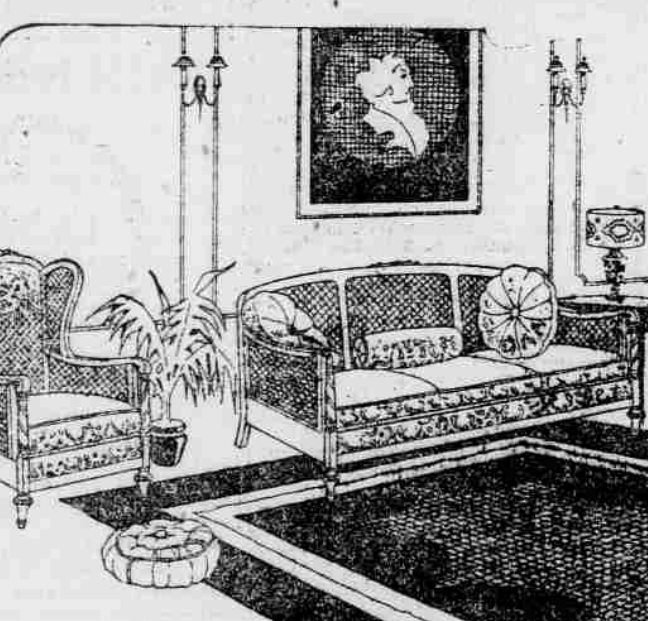
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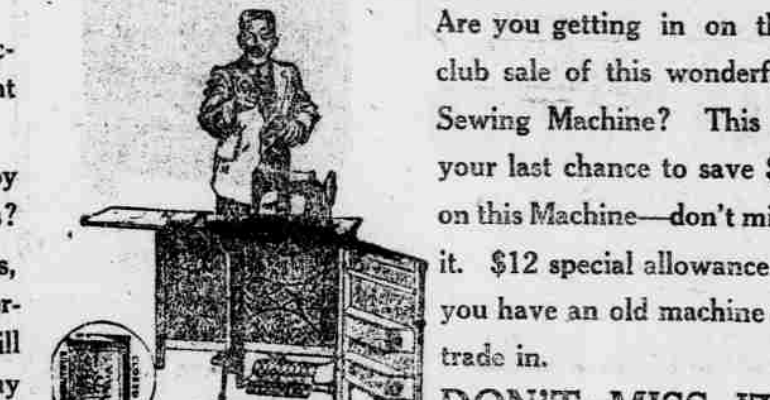
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without demur that there may be real signs whose cause and reason we can't yet explain because of our present ignorance. But nine out of every ten we can hunt back, if we choose, and discover their real meaning and explanation.

When we've done that we can then guessing, because we shall know. We shall know not only the meaning of the signs but we will be on the road to a comprehension of the reasons why they sometimes fail, not in themselves

but through our misreading of them. For instance, when we know that some volcanic cataclysm has filled the upper strata of the air with fine particles of blown-out vapor and dust, which reflect the rising and setting sunlight much as naturally suspended vapor would do, we are in position to understand why a red sunrise due to volcanic dust doesn't mean an approaching rain. We know why not as well as the Why. We work on knowledge instead of by guess.

Once, many years ago, driving up to Norwich from Pocomtuck with a friend, I spied a flock of swallows diving about close to a sandy bank. "Look out for rain," I said. "There's a sign which never fails." And it didn't rain—not for days and days! I was so non-plussed by the happening that I "hoofed it" back to that sand bank a few days later, to see if I could discover any explanation. There I found the same swallows, diving still close to the bank and ap-

pling up a species of sand-fly which seemed to have nests in the sand. The young insects on coming out of course flew close to the ground and brought the swallows down after them. Elsewhere the swallows were out of evidence, perhaps flying so high I could not see them. It was just a case of my having made a deduction without complete knowledge. When I stopped guessing and found out, the apparent misleading of the sign proved to have been simply a misreading of it on my part.

"Don't never prophesy unless you know," said Josh Billings. "Don't take weather signs on guess, when knowledge is obtainable."

THE FARMER.

Bristol.—There will be a big fresh-man class to enter Bristol High school this fall and men charged with providing school accommodations are wondering what they are going to do with

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